

Top Secret 219

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Saturday 3 December 1977

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NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION

Unauthorized Disclosure Subject to Criminal Sanctions

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Saturday, 3 December 1977.

The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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RHODESIA: Political Meetings

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[REDACTED] //The Rhodesian nationalist Patriotic Front alliance will begin another unity meeting in Maputo this weekend, but little progress toward cooperation is likely between the factions headed by Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe. Rhodesian Government representatives began settlement talks with moderate nationalist leaders yesterday in Salisbury.//

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[REDACTED] //The Front leaders probably will discuss how to respond to the government-sponsored settlement talks. At the initial procedural session in Salisbury yesterday, several of Smith's cabinet ministers met with the deputy leader of Ndebaningi Sithole's nationalist faction and Chief Chirau, who leads the government-sponsored Zimbabwe United People's Organization. Sithole is on a trip to the US and Europe, and probably will join the negotiations when he returns to Rhodesia later this month.//

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[REDACTED] //Bishop Muzorewa's African National Council is boycotting the settlement talks during a week-long period of mourning he declared in honor of those killed in the raids into Mozambique. Muzorewa is likely to join the talks after the mourning period end. [REDACTED]

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ZAIRE: Military Step-up Unlikely

25X1 [] It now appears that the National Front for the Liberation of the Congo will not step up its guerrilla activities against Zaire soon, but we believe the exiles remain intent on trying to re-enter Zaire and to cause the downfall of Zairian President Mobutu. The exiles, who are in Angola, are outnumbered by Zairian Army units in Shaba Region and are not receiving the aid they desire from Angola. The Front will probably continue small-scale attacks and may seek to exploit Zaire's economic problems and worker unrest.

25X1 [] The Zairian military had expected the Front, led by former gendarmes from the old Katanga Province, to go on the offensive after the onset of the rainy season in October in Shaba Region. So far, however, there has been no discernible increase in the Front's low-level, sporadic cross-border activity.

25X1 [] The US Embassy in Zaire reports that Mobutu's army has improved its preparedness in western Shaba, which the exiles easily occupied last March prior to a Zairian-Moroccan counter-offensive. The reorganized Zairian Army is maintaining an assertive presence in the border area and is conducting regular patrols and air reconnaissance. The Embassy also points out that the relative strength of the two forces--about two to one against the Front--and other factors suggest that the exiles are unlikely to launch a major guerrilla offensive in the near future. The Embassy also believes that the Zairian Army is now capable of containing attacks by the Front.

25X1 [] The Front also has problems in northeastern Angola. It is burdened by the thousands of sympathetic refugees from western Shaba, who fled to Angola to avoid the advancing Zairian Army as members of the Front withdrew from the area last spring. Competition for scarce food has led to incidents between the Front and refugees on the one hand, and Angolan Government and army authorities on the other.

25X1 [] Another problem for the Front in Angola is the presence of about 1,200 troops of the insurgent National Union for the Total Independence of Angola. The UNITA troops have moved into position to harass the Front; Mobutu has offered materiel aid to UNITA in exchange.

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[] The Zairian military believes that a joint Cuban-Angolan offensive will soon be launched to clear the UNITA troops from the border area. The Zairians expect the Angolans to use the Front to try to prevent the UNITA troops from retreating to sanctuary in Zaire. The Front's participation in such an operation would further delay its attempts to move against the Mobutu government.

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[] The Embassy's latest assessment is in line with the conclusion drawn earlier by UNITA officials, who believed that the exiles would be unable to mount an offensive during the next several months.

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NIGERIA: Constitutional Review

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[] *The review of Nigeria's new draft constitution enters its second phase on Saturday when a 232-member civilian assembly is to begin a section-by-section examination of the document. The assembly is scheduled to complete its review by October 1978.*

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[] The first phase of the review process, a general debate, resulted in the identification of three major issues that must be resolved. The first of these that will now be taken up in committee is the provision in the draft constitution for a strong president. The issue has proven less contentious than some observers expected, and the provision seems likely to be accepted. Opponents, some voicing fears that a strong president would inevitably exercise dictatorial powers, appear to favor a parliamentary government like the one the country had immediately after independence, because they believe this would allow them greater political opportunities.

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[] The most emotional and divisive issue, however, is the draft constitution's provision for a federal Islamic court of appeals. The proposal has stirred ethnic and regional sensitivities; most non-Muslim southerners think it would give unwarranted special privileges to the Muslim north. Unless a

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compromise is reached, the assembly could be deadlocked and the military forced to intervene even though it has promised civilian rule in 1979. The civilian eagerness for power, however, may provide sufficient incentive to paper over differences.

25X1 [] The third unresolved issue surrounds the draft charter's provision to expand press guarantees. Some assembly members who are also journalists favor greater press freedoms.

25X1 [] No serious challenge to the draft provision for a mixed economy has yet been mounted. Left-wing delegates would like the new constitution to declare socialist economic goals for Nigeria. []

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ALBANIA: Sharp Attack on China

25X1 [] *The Albanian leadership has launched its most vitriolic attack to date on China. The attack was prompted in part by China's recent establishment of party ties with Yugoslavia.*

25X1 [] A major policy speech by Albanian Premier Shehu on Tuesday contained an unusually strong personal attack on Yugoslav President Tito. The speech came one day after the publication in Peking of a Chinese telegram addressed to the Yugoslav party and government. The Albanian Premier described all those who reconcile themselves with the Yugoslav leadership as "revisionists." The Albanians have previously refrained from labeling the Chinese revisionists.

25X1 [] Shehu also attacked the "three worlds" theory--China's basic foreign policy tenet--as counterrevolutionary and having originated with Trotskiy, Bukharin, and other outcasts of the Communist world.

25X1 [] Shehu is the highest ranking Albanian official to attack the Chinese line openly. His words probably reflect policies adopted at the last plenum of the Albanian Central Committee in November. The speeches delivered at the plenum, including a report by party leader Enver Hoxha on the state of the Marxist-Leninist movement, have yet to be published by the Albanian media.

25X1 [] Some of Shehu's stronger words were directed against the Chinese leadership's alleged support for the interests of the US and Western Europe. At the same time, he pulled few punches in castigating Soviet "social imperialism." The tone of Shehu's remarks seemed to confirm Albania's continued opposition to establishing ties with the US or the USSR despite its deteriorating relations with China.

25X1 [] Chinese officials, while admitting to ideological difficulties with the Albanians, have said that they will not let such problems interfere with state-to-state relations. Peking's treatment of the 33rd anniversary this week of the founding of the present Albanian regime appears to be an effort to put the best face on the deteriorating relationship and a demonstration in propaganda jargon of the existence of tension between the two countries.

25X1 [] Two high-ranking Chinese party officials attended an Albanian Embassy reception in Peking celebrating the anniversary, but Chinese party chairman Hua Kuo-feng sent a decidedly cool greeting to Albanian party and government leaders. In its text the message contained no mention of the leadership of Hoxha and stressed Peking's continuing desire only to maintain friendly relations between the Albanian and Chinese peoples--a certain sign in Communist propaganda of strains.

25X1 [] The publication by Peking in early November of a lengthy ideological defense of the "three worlds" concept also suggests that Albanian criticism is being felt by the Chinese, who still provide important economic assistance to Albania.

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CHINA: Emergency Food Reserves

25X1 [] *//Failure of the Chinese grain harvest to keep pace with population growth in 1976 and probably also in 1977 appears to have affected China's goal for increasing food reserves. Since 1974, national emergency food reserves reportedly have been increased by only 10 million tons, far short of the rate required to achieve the planned 1980 goal.*

25X1 *national emergency food stores currently total 50 million tons, which is 20 million tons short of the amount China considers necessary in case of war.//*

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[] //The national food storage program was established in 1969, when China's grain stocks had been depleted because of the Cultural Revolution and the reduced 1968 harvest. A goal of 40 million tons for state grain reserves, the major component of food reserves, was announced in 1970. The Chinese asserted that this goal was achieved in 1974. As of 1974, Chinese plans reportedly called for an 80-million-ton reserve to be attained by 1980.//

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[] //Grain reserves are stored by the state, the communes, and the production brigades. Most of the grain reserves appear to be stored and maintained adequately in decentralized and dispersed facilities. In addition, families in agricultural areas reportedly are required to store 50 kilograms of food per family for emergency use; the authorities stress local self-sufficiency. Grain storage is dispersed over a wide geographical area for "strategic reasons" and to minimize transportation overloading during an emergency.//

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[] Grain reserves apparently are stored for at least one and possibly three years or more, whereas the small amount of stored perishable foodstuffs is replaced more regularly. Great emphasis is placed on drying grain to a safe 12- to 12.5-percent moisture content and on treating it with pesticide. These measures are effective against microbial spoilage and insects. []

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SPAIN: Basque Autonomy Statute

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[] *The draft statute, approved last weekend, to provide provisional autonomy for the Basque provinces will make a significant contribution toward stabilizing the political situation in Spain's troubled northern region. The statute, which was hammered out by the government and a Basque negotiating team, is likely to be promulgated by decree in the next few days. Similar legislation for Catalonia was passed in October.*

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[] Autonomy will be largely symbolic in both the Basque country and Catalonia until the powers that are to be transferred to the new regions are specified in the new national constitution.

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[] Several thorny problems on the Basque case remain. A decision on including the province of Navarra in the Basque region will be left to the deeply divided population of that province. The sensitive issue of the composition and supervision of local police forces was also postponed.

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[] In Catalonia Josep Tarradellas, the president of the recently reestablished regional government, will announce the composition of his government today. Because of the strong showing made by the Catalan branch of the Communist Party in the national parliamentary election last June, the regional government may include at least one Communist--a test case for military tolerance of Communist participation in local government.

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ITALY: Communist Vote on NATO

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[] *The Italian Communist Party has formally endorsed Rome's membership in NATO in a Chamber of Deputies vote on foreign policy. The Communists since 1972 have claimed to support NATO, but the vote marks the first time they have formally joined the traditional governing parties in expressing support for Italian participation in the Atlantic Alliance. The resolution will add to pressures for a larger, more direct Communist role in the governing process.*

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[] This is the second case in recent months of formal agreement on foreign policy between the Communists and other parties. In October, the Communists joined in a Senate resolution on foreign policy. It was far less detailed, however, and avoided any specific reference to NATO. Moreover, only a handful of senators actually voted for that resolution; the latest document was approved by about 80 percent of the deputies.

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[] The resolution, which cites the Atlantic Alliance and the EC as "the fundamental terms of reference of Italian foreign policy," was passed after a speech by Foreign Minister Forlani, in which he emphasized the importance of both NATO and the EC to Italy. He called NATO the "heart of Italy's foreign policy" and termed "irreversible" the country's membership in both NATO and the EC.

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[] As with the earlier Senate resolution, the Communists will point to the Chamber document as evidence that the government program agreement negotiated last summer has been expanded to include foreign policy. The Christian Democrats will have a hard time refuting that claim because, unlike the Senate statement, the Chamber resolution was formally approved in advance by high-level leaders of the six parties involved in the negotiations last summer.

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[] Meanwhile, the resolution is likely to aggravate internal problems in both major parties. It will cause concern among conservative Christian Democrats upset over the government's apparent drift toward an accommodation with the Communists. The Communists' more orthodox supporters, on the other hand, will see the resolution as another example of how the current leadership is diluting the party's revolutionary identity.

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[] In any event, the official reaction of most parties has been positive. The official journal of the governing Christian Democrats notes that the vote established a broad consensus "bound to strengthen the position of Italy" in the foreign policy field. Politicians on the left are likely to agree with the Socialists, who are arguing that the vote removes another barrier to the Communists' eventual participation in the government. []

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BRIEFS

USSR-Angola

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[] A Soviet delegation led by Politburo member Kirilenko arrives in Luanda today to attend the first national congress of the ruling Popular Movement. It is unusual for the Soviet party to send a Politburo member to party congresses outside Eastern Europe. Sending Kirilenko, who is General Secretary Brezhnev's chief deputy, is a significant indication of Moscow's continued support for President Neto. []

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USSR

25X1 [] On the eve of the reconvening of the US-USSR Working Group on the Indian Ocean, *Pravda* on Thursday called for demilitarization in the Indian Ocean and establishment of a zone of peace there. Last month the Soviets expressed support for a UN General Assembly resolution on the creation of a zone of peace and called for the elimination of all foreign military bases in the Indian Ocean area.

25X1 [] The *Pravda* commentary was generally optimistic about the prospects for an agreement on the reduction of US and Soviet forces in the Indian Ocean and implied that such progress as has been made is due to repeated Soviet prodding of the US. At the same time, it repeated Moscow's assertion that the US facility at Diego Garcia continues to impede efforts to establish a zone of peace.

25X1 [] The Soviets have long pushed these lines, but Moscow's support for the UN action and the *Pravda* commentary closely follow the loss of the Soviet base at Berbera and may well indicate that the Soviets are concerned over their weakened position in the area and in their negotiations with the US.

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Thailand-Vietnam

25X1 [] Thailand has announced the "complete normalization" of diplomatic relations with Vietnam. Relations were established in August 1976, but former Prime Minister Thanin's anti-Vietnamese stance embittered relations and prevented the opening of embassies. []

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